Year Two

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Year Two

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Summary

There are some things you can't share without ending up liking each other.
—Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

Hannibal considers the idea of friendship, Will deals with a bully, and the two of them discover they could be terribly dangerous together. This is part of a multi-fic series.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Chapter 1

Will

I can't believe summer is over. Don't get me wrong, I like school, but it was kind of nice to be with Dad again. Everything is simpler at home.

I already miss sitting on the balcony at Memaw's, when the fireflies come out and the air finally starts to cool enough so your shirt doesn't stick to you. Drinking soda—*real* soda, sweet and fizzy and a little warm—and Memaw smacking Dad on the shoulder when he suggests we pour a dollop of whiskey into it. He unwinds in times like that, uncoils muscles and mind and eases a weight off his shoulders that he doesn't even know he carries. When he asks about school, I… *exaggerate*, tell him about all the friends I've made, how fun the classes are. How good I am at flying a broom, which is actually mostly true, and gives him no end of amusement to hear about.

He also asked about my "dizzy spells," (his word for my so-called gift. I find his term more accurate, personally) and I outright lied. I told him I have a professor who's helped me control it, and it was worth it to see him smile, satisfied that he could give me something good. It aches somewhere in my chest to think about.

But it was hard, to go back to the mundane like that, after having my eyes opened. Sometimes I'd wake in the night, sweating, thinking the entire thing was a dream, there was no such place at Hogwarts, and I was not a wizard, just borderline insane. I'd pull out Bev's letters then, stamps stuck haphazardly all over the envelopes, address written in shimmery blue ink, and I'd read them all: remembering, *reassuring*. Her family took her on a backpacking trip, to Stonehenge, to Jericho, they saw dragons in Egypt and she swears she met a vampire in the Ukraine. "Graham!" they always start, "you'll never believe…"

But I did. And I clung to those stories. She is in this other world all the time, no need for vacations to mundania where you can't even use *accio* to bring you the tv remote. It doesn't matter that I'm more than a little jealous, that my letters always sounded about the same. You can only write "oh, dad and I went fishing again this weekend," so many times before you realize how monotonous that is.

Now, sitting in a train compartment on my way back, I'm equal parts excited and nervous, hoping she and Brian find me. I'm so ready to be back.

Chapter 2

Hannibal

Summer is. It is fine. Not much greater or lesser than the breadth of my year at school. It is, I will admit, comforting—no, relieving? No, too desperate. Words must be chosen with care, you understand, even written.

It is nice then, simply, to have a space of my own once more. Only the second span of time where this has been truth—well third, in technicality, but so long has passed since the first, it can't count quite as much as the other two. I did not appreciate what it meant, then, at any rate. Space and quiet that is impossible to find elsewhere. The servants do not expect me to speak with them, one way or the other. Lady Murasaki—Aunt, but always Lady—is company if I wish, and though I know you do not believe me, (spare me your incredulous paper stare) on occasion, I wish. She is dignified, rather poised and always lovely. The scent of cloves that wraps around me in her presence is a welcome change from the cheap perfumes of my classmates or the overly gaudy ones most other adults scent themselves with, believing that the more expense a scent has, the better it smells. Well, diary... I suppose journal, perhaps that's better, not to me. She was the first pleasant creature I smelled in years, when she had come to take me from that place. And so, in such way, we are bonded, and the smell of her oils will remain with me I believe, for a very long time.

She is probably my favorite, of all the people that surround me now. Of all the people in my recollections. I allow her to hold me at times if I wake in terror, allow her smiles and her gentle chidings. She does not sneer at the press of my ties, that I insist on wearing them in summer, nor that I would prefer to cook in the kitchen with her, learn the subtle art of calligraphy and music, than spend my time in the dusty soil with a boring childish ball of air. It is not weakness to have manners. And I have seen that samurai sword in her parlor, have no doubt she has training with such a thing. I will yet learn that as well. She is glad for a companion, I think, as we pass our days together. She loves me, I believe, though I am not altogether clear on the meaning of that, not unobscured by a sort of darkness. But she pities me. And in the end, callously, perhaps, I believe her vision of me is only slightly less obscured than those of her lacking acquaintances and my severely lacking peers. She is admirable, but in that she has fault.

She would have me leave the past altogether, if she could; wrap it away, tuck it in the corner, forgotten, unimportant and move onto the new life that has been granted me. Shining with purity, untouched by taint. But I am tainted, whatever the life. And what has passed, whether my mind can comprehend its details in full or not, is not unimportant. I have made my own promises. I cannot be what she wishes for me, simply shroud the holes in my mind with fabric and pretend they are not there. They are, I feel them and, one day, I will know them. She fears that.

I do not fear it.

I must confess to you, journal, (I cannot continue to address you as you, that is against the conventions of conversation, though you do a poor job responding) that on occasion, I wish she might understand better, that someone would. It is not so terrible to wish for a companion, is it? All of them manage it, and they have nothing to offer. Well, perhaps that is why. At least if I am to be alone, it will be because I am unique. Because I am better. I miss *her,* though. You know, I feel strongly that if she were with me, at least there would be one being who would know me.

In any case, it is time for me to go. I am making dinner on my own tonight and I do not care if this upsets the house elves.

H.L.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will

Detention.

Somehow, out of all this, *I* ended up getting detention.

Today, Crawford pulled me aside after class and asked me about my journal, and if it was helping with my empathy (*yeah, hey Professor, oh my vacation? It was great, good to be back*). I lied, told him I use the journal all the time, that I'm getting better at controlling it, and he looked like he was a frog and I a big, juicy fly.

I know he's trying to help, but sometimes I wish he'd just leave me alone.

Of course, when I walked out of the classroom with his hand ostentatiously on my shoulder, I knew that I was in trouble. And sure enough, only one period later, my old friend Krendler had me against a wall, asking what I'd done to get the honor of teacher's pet, and suggesting all kinds of things that I don't care to repeat. Sneed was there, the greasy Slytherin kid from my Charms class, and Holcomb, the dim bulb that follows them around like a lost, ugly puppy. Sneed was smiling. Holcomb just watched, waiting until they needed him. I'll bet he's picked the wings off flies before, bet he's watched with dull, stupid pleasure as they writhed. He looked at me the same way as my knees hit the stone floor, my glasses went clattering.

Suddenly, as I knelt there in a pile of the contents of my bag, I felt angry. Not just angry, *royally pissed*. Maybe it was Sneed's shit-eating grin, maybe it was the thought of losing my books *again*, or maybe it was a little bit of his own red hate twisting its way through my mind, lighting neurons and pumping adrenaline, but I got up and I *shoved him back*. I pushed Paul Krendler, and spat something obscene about his mother, and where he could put his accusations.

Fear flickered through him, quick and bright as he stumbled back. It's always just beneath the surface with him; fear of not being adequate, and jealousy, bitter and medicinal, but right now it flared in him and when I realized it was fear of me I felt a creeping sense of power.

But then he must have remembered that there were three of them, and one of me, and that I weigh maybe half as much as Holcomb sopping wet, because his fear was short-lived.

"You piece of shit," he sneered, "you little mudblood piece of shit."

A twitch of his head, and it was like someone had cut Holcomb's tether, he practically fell over himself getting to me, twisting my arm behind me until I cried out. If I moved, it hurt, and Holcomb jiggled it on occasion, seemingly just for his own sweaty, oppressive pleasure.

What I said next was shameful and weak, but as pressure on my arm grew, I hissed,

“You think Crawford will be happy if I show up to class limping?”

Krendler opened his mouth, likely to tell me exactly how many fucks he didn’t give, but a girl rounded the corner into our section of the corridor. I don’t know her name, but I knew her face; she’s a first year from my house, I’d seen her around the Ravenclaw common room. She passed in a hurry, eyes fixed pointedly on the floor, and despite the way she played blind to our little scene, I prayed that she would tell someone.

I felt the gears click into place before Krendler acted.

“You’re right,” he said, and his voice was dangerously quiet. I had never heard him speak in anything softer than his usual self-congratulatory bellow, and cold filled me from tip to toe.

“You’re right,” and in the same second, he reached out for the girl and grabbed her by the hair.

She and I cried out as one, I tried, panicked, to throw walls up, but her surprise and pain, sharp, splintered through me, a twisting, brittle brand of agony. Krendler yanked again, hard, and tears filled her eyes, stung in mine. I fought, trying to remember the stream, the summer, placid and calm, but my mind was muddied with a thick blend of other people’s filth and I couldn’t focus on anything but the hurt, the fear. Something cold and alien had come over Krendler, and it didn’t matter that what he was doing went beyond bullying into completely monstrous, he was enjoying it—the control, even momentary, was intoxicating for him.

Sneed uncrossed his arms where he had leaned casually thus far, suddenly wary, licking thin lips nervously.

“Paul, someone might—”

“Shut up, Sneed!” Krendler warned. Sneed fell back, though his gaze kept flickering to the corridor where the girl came from. Krendler still had one hand wrapped tight in her hair, but he was staring right at me, his watery eyes piggish and mean.

“You can feel that, huh?” he asked, that calm, soft tone back, his smile wide and eerie. When I didn’t answer, he twisted, and the girl’s terror flooded me, clenching my stomach and making it suddenly hard to breathe. I wanted to help, I wanted to run, and worst of all, I wanted to hurt her. I wonder how useful Crawford would feel my gift could be, knowing about *that* side of it.

My chest heaving, heart pounding nearly out of my chest, I’m not ashamed to admit that I begged.

“Stop, she doesn’t have anything to do with you.”

“Jack Crawford wouldn’t be happy if we broke his favorite toy,” he mocked, his voice high and sour. I wanted to kill him. If I could have gotten air back into my lungs, I might have tried.

He brought his wand up to the girl's throat, and I lunged forward, panic whiting out everything else. My arm wrenched painfully and Holcomb slammed me to the floor. From there, shoulder screaming and Holcomb squeezing all remaining air from my lungs, I could only see the girl's shoes; scuffed Mary Janes. She was sobbing, small hitches of breath that she tried to keep inside, her embarrassment, her pain, her fear and broken pride; her *helplessness*, I swam in it. There was nothing else, nothing but this god-awful moment, and Krendler watching the whole thing with a sick glee. My cheeks were wet.

"I'm sorry," I cried, unable to think of anything else, "I'm sorry." I tried once more to summon the river, eyes squeezed tightly, and for a moment it flickered there in my consciousness, a tempting escape. Then it was gone, slipped from my fingers as dread overtook her and, in turn, me. I prayed for Paul Krendler to drop down, cold and dead, and I don't even know if that was really me or her. Her Mary Janes watched me impassively, but I was also looking at myself, pathetic and red-cheeked on the ground while a bigger boy held me down with a mean grin. When I felt, beyond the rage and the pain, her *pity*, I wished that *I* was dead.

And then, someone else was there. I couldn't see them but I heard the girl's relieved sob, felt Holcomb's fingers tense around my arm. Krendler was saying something else cruel and unclever, so I don't think he even really noticed until he heard the swish of robes; a wand being drawn. There were no words exchanged, no incantations murmured, only a sharp stab of rage and then Krendler and Holcomb screaming in their own stupid pain. Holcomb had let go of my arm at last, and I pulled myself shakily to my knees to see Krendler, staring at his hands in horror. The girl was already fleeing down the hall, Sneed following suit not long after.

"What did you do?" Krendler snarled, and I realized that he was looking at me, unaware of the boy pointing a wand in one shaking hand from the end of the hall. He staggered forward, like he was going to grab me, wring some kind of answer from my neck, but then he recoiled, drawing his hands in towards his stomach as red, searing burns appeared over them, bubbling and splitting skin. His howl was terrified. *I* was terrified.

I looked at the boy through the low haze of emotions I was just barely keeping at bay, swaying with the effort, and saw that he was utterly cold. I've never seen anger look quite like that on someone so young—focused, calculated, and nothing at all like the wild tangle of my mind.

And I recognized him, with Krendler and Holcomb's wails behind me. It was the kid from Potions last year, the mute. I'll just bet Krendler's ego loved that; cursed by a kid everyone thinks is a squib, a boy whose robes hang loosely, whose hair is combed crisply to the side like the world's smallest accountant. Who faced him alone in that corridor, lips curled with disdain at the sight of him. I smiled.

Their yells were drawing a small crowd, and even as I was scrambling to my feet, someone had gotten a teacher. Red faced and blustery, she took in the scene without really looking, not caring to understand maybe, and assigned the remaining four of us detention before whisking Krendler and his sasquatch to the infirmary.

The boy, Lecter, helped me pick up my books after we were through getting yelled at. The other students milled about, cast us curious glances, but didn't stop. I would have expected righteous rage from anyone else at the injustice of the reprimand—I know I felt it—but he was just calm. Serene, even. I was reminded of the river. He handed me my glasses, carefully.

"It's Hannibal, right?" I asked, voice hoarse. I found I couldn't meet his eyes, but I looked up in time to see him nod, curtly.

"That was a nice hex," I offered, tucking the last of my things away as he stood, "How'd you do that without speaking?"

He shrugged, as though it didn't matter, or maybe he really didn't know. I ignored the hand he held out, got to my feet. My shoulder still throbbed, but at least it wasn't my wand arm. The worst damage was in my head; everything felt raw, over-extended. I wiped my face on my sleeve while I took stock of myself.

When I felt ready, I forced myself to meet his eyes. They are a nice shade of brown, dark and warm. Almost reddish. I felt the pull, to let myself be consumed by his thoughts, his mind, but I resisted, bringing myself back to the stream. A long breath, like Crawford taught me. Hannibal watched me, head cocked, as I did so.

"Well, uh… thanks," I murmured, cheeks hot. He shrugged again, although a smile flickered across his features, and we walked to class.

Chapter End Notes

Krendler, Sneed, and Holcomb, though not on the show, are actually all characters from the novel *Hannibal*. And not particularly nice ones, if you're familiar with the books.

Also, I'm sorry to have put Will through this, but Krendler just kept sneaking around the edges of the story, waiting for his chance. And Hannibal happened to be in that hallway, so in that way it was more fortuitous than either he or Will could possibly have known. Thanks, as always, for reading, and I look forward to you all watching this unfold, now that they've officially met :)

-Q

Chapter 4

Hannibal

Dangerous.

It's a gleeful thought. But everything is rather a bit gleeful for me right now, the burst of magic still lingering in my veins, breathing through me as though my limbs have been trapped in manacles and have now, even if only for a moment, been granted freedom. If I wave my wand in the correct variations the spells will work, albeit weakly, and fading with every beat of my heart. But for a moment, there is magic, *I* am magic, and voice or no, it feels complete. I enjoy the sensation. Relish in it triumphantly, though I know it will not stay.

He is dangerous.

My unassuming little deskmate and his *Thanks*. Not only a bit, but incredibly, once he manages to cease being a danger to himself and re-channel his abilities in more productive directions. Crawford had hung about, hovering rather unnaturally, eager and self serving creature that he is, and dragged The Boy away, what is his name? something common but not unpleasant, not Bob or Harry. Garish names.

But the Professor knows, his name obviously, but about the gift, asked something about the lessons. I have great doubt these lessons are about anything more than control. I am sneering. Control, it is beautiful, it is a miracle. It is *power*. I admit I am fascinated, I have never seen a brain operate in such capacity before. Ordinarily, I would not have stopped for screams, my own enough for me, other people's not my concern. But the tandem of it; his and the girl's. I admit I do not like the screams of frightened little girls, so perhaps I might have stopped, but the way they echoed. He'd mimicked hers, he *was* her, his mind reaching out, twining, connecting. Incredible.

But then Krendler. That tasteless oaf. That giant moron, in need of many more lessons than what he was dealt, abusing it in such a manner. Grossly, obtusely, tainting the gift for his own purposes. The boy screaming, the girl screaming, so much screaming, and it had been such a lovely connection. And then, lost in my mind as I was, I did not notice it building, the prickle, the electric current of magic that wakes sometimes, mostly around screams, I have begun to notice, rising through me, power flushing my cheeks, through my anger, and the wand. I reach for it, though I do not need it, I would wager, not really, not at a moment like this when the swirl of lightning is enough and it bursts out of me, shrieks pain through them, tears into their skin, sets it aflame. The fire is in me too, but I am its master, it does not rip at me—though it could, I know it could, the wrong loss of control. But I am all control as I send the burns rippling along their unworthy bodies, consume them as I could not before. I only think that he needs a lesson, that he needs to remove his hands from something that exceeds him, that he has no cause or place to touch.

He—The Boy, not Krendler—is dangerous and it makes me dangerous. We could be terribly dangerous together. I think I am intrigued again. More so than when all that curried my favor was a simple word of thanks, though it came again, as we stood there. But I am far more ready to accept it, I gave him a smile in return for his this time. I can afford to smile at him, he has brought the magic, and it is stronger than it has ever been. Something about him, I know without knowing, and the sudden unbearable rage I felt at his pain. Well, at the abuse of something so rare, but also, maybe, maybe at the anguished noises.

It is foolish to be pleased by a smile, a different thought, but it tangles through the rest in my mind, (a strange state of disorder, at present. That is what you are for is it not?) Smiles are ephemeral, and, largely, they are false. But his own widened with the one I returned and something about that. I should not dwell on such things, the softening makes the flit of energy die quicker, fed by the cocktail of rage and avengement. But something about that was drawing, and I do not know if it was his ability, if he was reading my emotions, mirroring them back to me so that I would be pleased. Or if it was... something else. Something strange. Do they call it friendship? I suppose a friend is someone who you have taken an interest in, whom you have shared experiences with, and we have now exchanged two, the book and the hall, that is two more than with anyone else. And I have not yet found him lacking in any specific way. The definition in the dictionary is not much use in this case, except for the final passage which simply states, “a state of mutual trust and support between allied nations.” That does not sound altogether too compromising, though I think we will start with pretend trust. It is possible I could use an ally. And as I said. I am curious. More curious, of course, than anything else.

We have a detention soon, together, and so we will see. I do not know if I will be able to tear myself from the interesting details of the long waged wars of Goblins—they were quite vicious really, some very shrewd tacticians, Goblins—for long enough to even acknowledge him. But perhaps, I can make the effort to offer another smile.

I make the door slam with a flick.

After all, it is rude to be ungracious when a boon has been given.

I shall close you with a spell as well, send you to your place.

Enjoy your riveting afternoon on the shelf.

H.L.

Chapter 5

Will

Detention… actually wasn't that bad. I hate to say it, as though even writing it might summon up the monotone professor, but I almost had… fun?

Surely that's not the right word. We were copying down entire sections of the textbook for *three hours*, but at least it was just Hannibal and I. Someone apparently thought it wise to split us up from Krendler (I suspect Crawford, although he's acted completely oblivious to the incident) and I'm hoping with all my heart that the Professor who wrote us up had them scooping up thestral dung off the grounds.

As for me, I spent the evening at a desk, filling parchment after parchment with the most minute details of the Goblin Wars in my scrawl, envying Hannibal's perfect handwriting, and stifling laughter when he flipped to a page in his book to show me Paul Krendler's head, drawn in exquisite detail atop what was unmistakably a donkey's body. He didn't laugh, but he smiled, and it crinkled his eyes at the corners. Pleased, maybe, to have someone to commiserate with. I know I was.

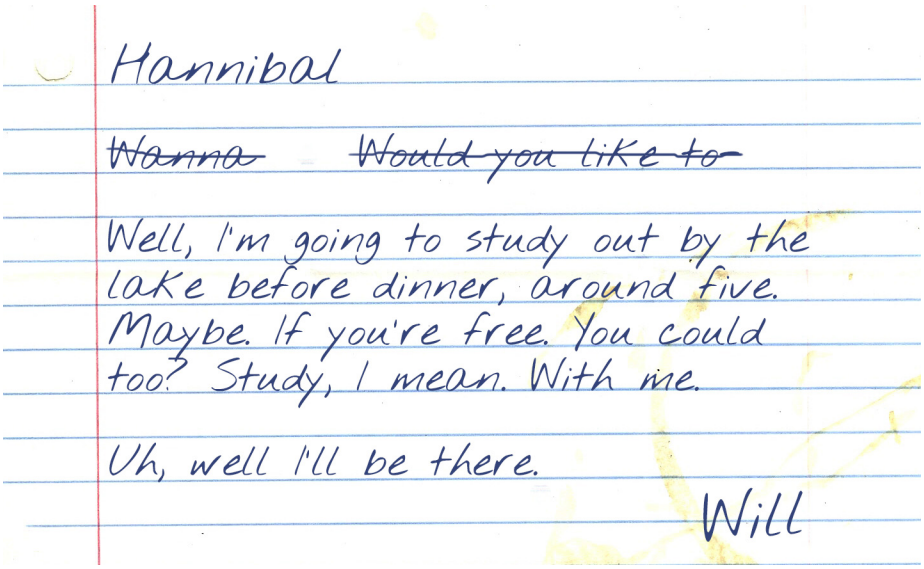
Chapter 6

Hannibal

When an owl appeared at my side this morning, I must confess it took me more than a moment to realize it was waiting for me. My Aunt favors a far sleeker bird than the creature that managed to topple itself into my oatmeal, dragging little bits of brown sugar and berries into its feathers. It was not the most graceful of birds, to be sure; tawny, streaked with gold and grey, plumage slightly squashed, but it certainly was determined to fill its task. Hobbling all around the table until it could face me and stick out its leg expectantly—pleased, I think, to have been entrusted with such a task. I noticed idly that it favored its right eye over the other. Blind, perhaps; a rescue, no doubt. Perhaps even one of the school's, on loan.

It managed to spill what was left of my breakfast before taking off. I suppose we must forgive animals their natures.

The note itself was fairly short. Written in scrawled script, a slightly nervous hand. At the top, a little doodle, poorly drawn, Krendler again, on the head of toad this time. It drew a smile from me despite its fairly inaccurate anatomical depiction. Curious, that I would typically find such an attempt unseemly and yet, it endears me strangely. I allow the emotion, considering it as though from a distance, and read on.


Hannibal
~~Wanna~~ ~~Would you like to~~
Well, I'm going to study out by the lake before dinner, around five. Maybe. If you're free. You could too? Study, I mean. With me.
Uh, well I'll be there.
Will

I admit I snorted a little. This *Will*, (that is his name, Will. I like it) he has a way with words, does he not? And all the grace of his owl.

Studying together is a novel notion to me, I have no need of assistance in my studies, and any sort of additional company throughout my day means more effort exerted than I largely care to. So I did not reply to him, but the thought would not leave me. All day I read and re-read the little note, traced the terrible sketch, and considered the value such an engagement would offer me and its costs. I was, am, interested still in his gift. In the detention room together, he

would often screw his face up, brow furrowing suddenly as though at an effort of keeping something at bay. I can only assume he was attempting to keep himself out of my head, not that he would find much, and though I did not ask, I observed it with keen interest any time it would occur. So that would be a reason to go, and I am not one to shy away from experience.

I am not scared of a few hours spent in someone's company. It has just never occurred.

So, journal, I went. And it was… not intolerable.

It almost ended before it began, several times, though. First, because when I approached, my bag in hand, all my books stacked neatly within, my list of assignments ready in my mind, the sight that greeted me, was most definitely not any kind of studying, but Will rolling around in the grass with a girl I did not recognize, shouting and shrieking, tugging at each other's clothes and hair. Attempting it would seem, to faceplant the other in the mud. Behaviors I might identify as "playing" were they five and dim witted. I could feel that specific twist of sensation, when I know I do not belong in a place, my eyebrow raising, confusion, a little apprehension, the note had most certainly said - studying. And it had not mentioned any girl. Perhaps Will had decided that since I had not responded, I was not coming and made alternative plans, that would be acceptable on his part, I ought to have assented or declined, but -

I cannot help but stand there, journal, despite myself, and eventually, he frees himself and looks at me. I was very ready to leave at that point, but at a sudden burst of his laughter, eyes widening and a scramble to his feet, I stayed frozen in place.

"Hannibal -" His smile is wide, I am not used to wide smiles greeting me, more confusion, a tilt of my head. "You came."

I shrug. He beckons to me so I come closer, though at that moment I am rather regretting attempting this at all.

"Hannibal." The girl frowns, blunt, arms crossing, she seems suspicious, unhappy I've interrupted their game.. "The mute?"

"Bev," Will's groan is loud as I sit, but I only blink at her, pull out my pad and write carefully.

That was rude. I am not deaf.

A flip and she reads it, eyes widening and then she's laughing and I certainly do not understand, but she sticks her hand in my face, chuckling and looks chastened.

"Yeah, you're right, my mouth can get away with me." She shakes it in my face and I'm tempted by leaving again until - "Look, sorry - don't go though, Will will kill me."

We both look over at him and she grins, he's a little red, I smile too, just a little. Take her hand, because *I* am not rude.

“He’s been waiting all day for this.” She adds slyly, but I’ve already pulled away to get out my books. They may do as they please, but I have come with the intentions of completing my potions essay. Will moves closer and I find I’m not averse, draw him his owl in the corner of my notes to hear him gasp a smile.

In the end, I find myself strangely content. I don’t say or write much to either one of them, and sometimes they talk around me, over me, to me. Beverly—Bev, I learn—still seems to be a little dubious of my presence, but I don’t really have much care for her opinion. The evening passes and we part.

I am still smiling.

Novel, indeed.

Goodnight,

H.L

Chapter 7

Will

We went to the library today—Hannibal, Bev, and I. Bev doesn't seem to know what to make of him, but in her usual way, she's loud and glittering, and curious enough to make up for his silence.

And Hannibal loves the library. Maybe it's because the ominous presence and severe glares from the librarian—a tall, mean woman who looks like she's just sucked on a lemon—make it necessary to pass notes, which lets him speak more freely than when Bev and I are outside, bantering back and forth on the way to class. He also seems to be generally enthralled by books, especially those of the old, crumbling variety that the librarian wrings her hands over, despite the fact that he's never treated them with anything but care.

We sat at a desk beneath the window, books stacked around us (I built a small barricade out of mine, to hide from the vulture-like glare), trying to figure out the secret to nonverbal casting.

"It says it's all about the *intent*," I read quietly from the page, finger tracing over the illustration of a red-faced wizard swinging his wand wildly, "If your intent is strong enough, it can compensate for the lack of an incantation, or even a wand."

Hannibal rolled his eyes, and I felt my responding smile.

If it was that easy… he wrote on the parchment between us..

"Well, you did it before," Bev whispered, glancing quickly at the librarian, "Can't you just… do whatever that was again?"

Hannibal's hex had passed into school legend the moment Krendler appeared back in class, scowling and with bandaged hands. Those who saw us that day swear he didn't even have a wand on him (ridiculous and untrue). Unfortunately, he can't seem to reproduce that effect in class, so despite his skill with potions, he can barely make an object wiggle when he tries to summon it. He sighed, shook his head, and wrote:

I don't know what I did then, I don't even think that was a real spell; I was just angry.

"Well then maybe we need to get you mad," Bev teased, nudging him with her shoulder. A sharp silhouette snapped in our direction, and she ducked gleefully. Hannibal shot Bev a dark look, but his smile broke through.

Perhaps you should, he scrawled, *maybe I'll miraculously perform "silencio"*

I smothered the laugh that threatened with my hand. Bev put on her best affronted expression, which was still not very convincing.

“Young Lady,” the librarian snapped, appearing suddenly in a flourish of old wool and the scent of mothballs. She gestured, tight-lipped, to a sign on the wall that featured a terrifying drawing of a talking book, and the slogan “Shut your trap, or you’re not welcome back!”

“A little decorum, *please*,” she sniffed, turning away. We did an excellent job of looking penitent for all of about two seconds before Bev whispered,

“What a stupid poster; that doesn’t even rhyme.” and we dissolved into hushed giggles again.

Chapter 8

Hannibal

I am not sure how one can be so skilled in Transfiguration, perfectly competent at Charms, but fail so entirely at Potions. It is simple. There are instructions, you follow them, and then you have your completed brew. Of course, there is an art to it, I do not deny, a certain elegant hand that can make a passable brew into a stunningly powerful one… but I am not asking for him to create *masterpieces*, (the implied "such as mine" should be obvious, I will spare the arrogance of saying it) I am simply trying to keep him from melting down yet another cauldron.

Much as those desolate noises of dismay make me smile, even smirk, these days. I quite enjoy smirking, I find, though such an expression is likely to end with me being tackled with a growl. I am...perhaps starting to understand the sport of such a thing, pushing each other to the ground and attempting to wrest superiority. A good way of deciding the winner of an argument when one is mute, hrmm, and stronger. I am smirking now, too bad he cannot see it. And there is a certain physicality to it that I enjoy exerting.

But. I do *not* enjoy wrinkling my clothing in such a manner. That I do not like at all. Bev laughs when I pull away frowning and straightening my shirt, I do not think it is very funny. Will is sympathetic, but I see the amusement struggling behind his lips. Always I sigh, huff away to iron it if I am in a poor mood, usually, but also tackle right back for daring to chuckle, if I in a better one. A lot of moods. I am entitled. They always seem curiously happy at the latter, as though I am learning some terribly important lesson. I do not know what to make of this. But is quite pleasing to always win... Except if Will decides he is playing unfairly, which is to say, tickling. But that is ruled unacceptable as per my rules. A game must have rules. I will enforce my own, if no one else cares to. Bev rolls her eyes when I write that too. She shouldn't make a habit of such poor behavior, I think.

In any case, that went too long. I was merely writing to express my sincere shock. He is quite capable of it, I know that he is. And yet, my shoes have bright pink splotches and there are flowers growing out of the floor. At least it is inspired if not correct.

He always manages to be a surprise.

H.L.

Chapter 9

Will

I may have miscalculated the amount of fire necessary for our last Charms exam. Although, to be fair, I think asking a twelve year old to conjure any level of flame is a little irresponsible.

Anyways, I destroyed the test—literally—and I now owe the professor an essay on the proper technique behind *incendio*.

Joy.

Hannibal seemed to find it funny. I was explaining my plight through notes passed in class today, and he couldn't help but scrawl

Well done.

before losing himself to silent giggles. As in the test was—well, anyways. Hilarious, isn't he? But as much as I live to amuse Hannibal, I was embarrassed. It's a first year spell, Charms is usually one of my better subjects, and I turned away, pretending not to see his increasingly insistent notes against my elbow.

When the professor split us into pairs to practice our engorgement charms, I still wouldn't face him, though by that point I was more sheepish than angry. He hadn't really done anything worth the silence I'd treated him with, and he really doesn't like being ignored. I struggled with the spell for a few moments, waving my wand haphazardly while mumbling the incantation, and accomplishing nothing beyond making the knut in front of me shiver slightly. I huffed, frustrated.

Then—

Touch. Hannibal leaned over on the back of my chair, slid his hand so it covered mine. He looked at me, brows raised, and I felt his slight nervousness, the anticipation of an answer to a question not voiced.

"...Oh—yeah. Sure."

For some reason, my cheeks felt hot. It was probably just further embarrassment—I had been sitting there feeling sorry for myself, while he can only ever practice the motions, has gotten this far mainly on the merits of his theoretical work. And I begrudged him a laugh at my—admittedly, a *little* funny, in retrospect—failed fire charm.

The brush of his fingers across mine felt charged somehow. Like we were crackling with magic at the spot of connection. The back of my neck, too, felt all shivery, though that may

have been the effect of someone in my proximity, his breath soft against my cheek. I cleared my throat.

“Engorgio,” I tried, without much hope, and he pulled my hand into a precise, diagonal swipe up.

The coin, though still a telltale bronze color, swelled to the size of a Galleon, rattled smartly against the table. I laughed, surprised,

“It worked!” and turned to see his returning grin over my shoulder.

“Between the two of us we might just pass the next exam,” I joked quietly, perhaps in bad taste. His hand had not left mine, and I found that I didn’t want it to as his eyes crinkled in acknowledgement. There was something in his thoughts that echoed my own, though his face had taken on that curious, narrow-eyed look that he gets when faced with a new, complex recipe. Something about warmth, and the way our fingers seemed to fit like that. The air I took into my lungs seemed too thick suddenly, hot and—

And then I realized that was because the oversized coin was steaming and had begun to sear its way down through the table.

I cursed, cast a lackluster freezing charm in the hopes that I hadn’t just inadvertently started another fire. And although he was smirking awfully, Hannibal managed not to laugh.

Chapter 10

Hannibal

I am covered in sugar, journal.

Sugar and flour, thankfully no egg. Though Will is splattered, much to my great amusement. I'm laughing over at him now, and he's glaring back at me, but it is really rather funny. *Egg head*, I might have told him he was that. He's sticking out his tongue. That earns a tut, an example of the kind of charm I must contend with on a daily basis. I, as you see, lead a miraculous existence. But yes, yes, my hair is full of it, it is all over my face, and even still I do believe this has been the most superior birthday I have had to date.

I believe I should pause and retreat, explain a bit more assiduously. It is, firstly, my birthday. I had mentioned that to be so in passing, but proceeded to forget promptly about it. Birthdays are not celebrated in orphanages, and much time has passed since I was in the proper position for one. Nor truly, had I felt the need. But to Will it seemed something of a crime.

"So you've never had a cake?" Those wide eyes and then that squint, the displeased one he usually maintains for potions alone. I shook my head.

"Candles?" His voice had lilted in wonder, and for a moment I could not but follow the cadences of it. Sound attracts me—voice especially, and Will's...more than the rest. "Gifts?" Even in his own tattered existence, it seems that there was always all of the above, but not in mine.

I did not think much of it, after that. But today, I open the door to an abandoned classroom we often frequent, a shout greets me, and that is all the warning I receive before I am abysmally drenched. A side step of the milk and water, a duck of cocoa, but even I am not quick enough for the flour and the sugar. As I said it is fortunate the eggs go in the other direction.

I am smirking again, he threatens to find more eggs so we can both experience the delight. I draw a sketch of his face for him. He growls. Pleasing.

It was one of those magic mixes, you see, all the ingredients included and a tap of wand to make them fly in to each other, except, regrettably, but at least evenly, they decided instead they would fly apart. Perhaps Will simply became distracted by my opening the door, but I am willing to place the blame entirely on his shoulders. That makes him redder.

But when the veil of it all finally settled and I could see his face once more, it was so delightfully surly, disgruntledly frowning, and the egg was dripping off of his glasses onto his face, just so, that I confess, I could not help myself. I doubled over laughing, laughter that even I did not know I was quite capable of. It was simply so funny, all of it, the scene, his face, the balloons floating about everywhere. That he had tried so unbearably hard, for me.

Effort. I had not expected, and I a pleasant wrench in my stomach, to think I am worth, even accidental, cake innard coating.

A now splattered banner announces *Happy Birthday Hannibal* to the room. And Will echoes the sentiment, sarcasm heavy on his tongue. We look at each other for a moment, and then we're both laughing uncontrollably.

We aren't troublemakers, of course not, trouble simply seeks us out.

"Happy Birthday," he murmurs again, as I lift my finger to wipe a smudge of batter from his cheek.

I shall see you later, journal. It is my birthday and I am celebrating. There are rumors of a party later. I am afraid I am much too busy to write.

H.L.

Chapter 11

Will

You know, I think I'll actually miss this place over the summer. Unlike last year, where mostly I just missed being able to use my wand, I found myself walking around the castle, memorizing things in my head. Hannibal caught me doing it, once, and raised a brow, but I just laughed and explained, and he smiled like he understood.

They came with me today while I walked the grounds. Usually, I'd be bothered, because this is my time to think, but… I dunno. Somehow because it's them, it's alright. Bev chattered away about letters, and how she'd better not get another one describing a fish I'd caught unless I took a picture.

She didn't stick around long though, her parents are picking her up early and she had to pack. She kissed each of us on the cheek, once, (Hannibal accepted his stiffly, awkwardly) and promised to catch up with us at breakfast if she didn't see us before then.

And then it was just Hannibal and I. We sat under the big tree for a while, the one we usually study around. I just let my thoughts drift, and Hannibal sketched in that little book he always carries with him. It felt… I don't have a word for it. Companionable? That sounds stiff and not quite right. It was an easy silence, nice to have company, but without the pressure for conversation. Does that sound antisocial? I would be worried about that with anyone else, even Bev, I'm constantly trying to read her reactions to things, decide the best way to act. Worrying over something stupid I said. I never feel that way with Hannibal, maybe because he's never mocked me, even at play, or maybe because he seems indifferent to whether or not I provide conversation, I don't know.

And I try not to pry into his and Bev's minds, I find it… embarrassing and kind of intimate. But sometimes, like everyone, they just… reach out, and I can't help it. That's what it was like now. I could tell that Hannibal was as content as I, that he was pleased with the warm May air and the sound of the trees, and whatever he was drawing.

I almost drifted off that way, with the sun on my closed eyelids, and Hannibal's shoulder against mine, until he nudged me, gently, and set his notebook in my lap.

Could we write to each other as well?

I almost laughed, I was so surprised.

"Of course," I said instead. Somehow I had just assumed that we would, I couldn't imagine a world where I *didn't* have him around.

"I um… I don't have my own owl though; dad says it's not in our rental agreement. So… I have to uh, send mine the Muggle way," I confessed, a little embarrassed though I couldn't say why. I would miss the tawny, one-eyed guy I'd borrowed throughout the school year.

He was another part of Hogwarts that I had spent the morning trying to memorize, despite the groundskeeper's assurances that he would be well-cared for, and would enjoy his rest from constantly passing notes between Ms. Katz, Mr. Lecter, and I. Still, I worry that nobody will bring him treats over the summer, or that he might forget me.

Hannibal didn't comment, but he bit his lip; something I've never seen him do before. It was like he was trying to keep something locked in.

I've never had someone to write to.

I'll admit, it took me by surprise. I don't know a lot about Hannibal, I realized in that moment. I guess maybe this summer I'll find out. I took his book back, and he let me, hands clutched in his lap.

Well, now you do.

He nodded, smiled, and that feeling was there again, the warm, buttery happiness. Maybe it was a stupid thing to say, a little obvious, but I'm… not concerned. I sat back while he picked the book up and continued his drawing, and worked on trying to memorize that moment, exactly how it was.

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal

Will is, that is, I think, he might be—

I am considering the possibility of friendship.

There. I said it. Written out it seems foolish, and yet not. I, as you know, had not thought this to be a possibility by any stretch of the imagination. Content as I am with who I am, with who everyone else is in comparison.

And yet.

I've found myself looking forward to our hours together, to a sudden ruffle of drooping plumage and an offer to watch the quidditch match, or to study, or to simply walk along the grounds. Sometimes Bev joins us, I admit, she too has grown on me, though I would not yet apply to her the label I am considering for Will. Even just thinking of both of them, pondering side by side, I see a clear differential in my affection. And it is more than my curiosity, I think I have to acknowledge this now, though it would be simpler if I did not. I remain entirely intrigued with the higher functioning of his magic and his mind, what it could do, how I might use it, do not mistake me. But it is simply; I do not know. I wish to see him, I am happier when I am with him than without. Even when he is messy or crass or silly, even then—and I have no explanation for it.

Dangerous, you say? I must agree. I know better than this. I have learned these lessons; investing, hurting, disappointment. But I am loathe to deny myself, this you know also, now that I have had a taste and found it largely more satisfying than being alone.

My friend Will, then, maybe.

It seems to roll off the finger. I imagine it would off the tongue as well. Perhaps someday.

H.L.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for sticking with us for these first two fics! Year three will begin posting early this upcoming week.

A forewarning; as with the Harry Potter novels, each of these fics grows a little darker as it grows in word count. Year three is considerably longer than either of these two, in which we were really still just dabbling, trying to feel out the universe and the characters in it. And although there's still a great deal of Hogwarts-themed fluff, the boys are also going to begin to delve into some of the more complex aspects of their lives in this 'verse. Some questions will be answered, but each resolution brings a new set of things to ponder.

Oh, and did I mention kisses? Of the first variety, not the forehead kind ;) Though I won't spoil it by telling you who.

We hope you've enjoyed reading so far, as much as we've enjoyed writing. Lots more to come.

-Q

End Notes

On The Subject of Silence...

We had a question on Year One about why nobody was teaching Hannibal non-verbal magic (a very good question). During the course of the research behind this fic (ie, hours spent on the HP wiki and Pottermore) most of what we could glean about non-verbal is that it is a fairly advanced form of magic; In the books especially. The movies often show Harry & co. casting non-verbally, but that's likely to avoid cinematic battles in which everyone is shouting.

With that in mind, it also seems like it depends on the amount of power a person has at a given moment. It would have been extremely convenient (and hilarious) if Harry could have just spontaneously blown up the Dark Lord as he did Aunt Marge, with no wand or incantation, but we have to assume since he didn't (or you know, done something similar but more effective), it wasn't a possible option.

It's therefore likely that Hannibal has in fact had instances of magic during emotional extremes, as many young witches and wizards do, but he struggles on the more mundane level of coursework, where most students—and even most adults—rely on wands and words to channel that raw power all magical folk have. And the sheer fact of the matter is, it's something that's really hard to teach without having first had the training wheels of an incantation. (He is also like, thirteen, *tops* at this point.) Not to say that he *couldn't* master it with time and work—and that is probably the goal of the faculty. But they are also probably understanding of the fact that, for the time being, he will be behind his classmates in that way, and make allowances for it.

Thank you GuessWho for the great question, and the chance to nerd out!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!